

the 1.7 million Americans who have been laid off since the President's last economic plan in 2001.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the President and his economic team have managed our economy miserably. Now is not the time to trust the President again when he says he has a jobs plan. Let us act to extend unemployment insurance and make sure that American families can get back on their feet.

□ 2030

UNEMPLOYMENT IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, tonight the Congressional Black Caucus comes together to address this House because we are very concerned about many Americans who may be watching us at this very moment who do not have a job. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, there are about 8.8 or 8.9 million of them. We come to talk about them because we want them, Mr. Speaker, to know that we care about them, and we care about what happens to their families.

Mr. Speaker, the temporary Federal unemployment benefits program that we passed not very long ago will expire on May 31. In just 10 days, Mr. Speaker, thousands of Americans will lose their unemployment benefits, and then approximately 80,000 more will lose their benefits weekly.

Since the beginning of President Bush's administration, our economy has lost over 2.5 million jobs. Mr. Speaker, that is a lot of jobs, 2.5 million. We must understand that these are not just numbers or some statistical phenomenon that I am talking about. These are real, everyday Americans who have lost their jobs and who, after next week, will not be able to feed their children, pay their bills, or provide for their most basic needs.

Mr. Speaker, I speak with my constituents every day, since my district is close to Washington and I commute to and from Baltimore on a daily basis. The constituents I represent are very, very worried, as are millions of Americans around the country.

Last Monday morning, any commuter driving near my Baltimore office would have noticed a long line at around 8 o'clock in the morning curling around the building called the Fifth Regiment Armory.

From the appearance of the line, one could have easily thought it was a group of music fans waiting in line to buy tickets to some concert. However, this was not the case at all. These individuals were in line to attend my Seventh District Job Fair that I host in Baltimore every year. They got up early to meet with 50 regional employers who have vacancies despite a rough economy.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that normally we would have 120 employers, but the fact is that many employers said that they have no jobs to give.

One of the other things we were trying to get, Mr. Speaker, was employers who offered health insurance benefits. Many of the employers who had participated in the past said that they had to drop those benefits because of the economy, so we ended up with 50 employers.

Throughout the day, my job fair brought about 3,000 job seekers to meet with these employers. But compared with recent years, most of the people who attended the job fair this year were there because they had been laid off.

In the past, when I would interview people throughout the day in the job fair, I would often find that they were people who had a job who were just merely trying to get a better job, or they were people who had two jobs and they were trying to get a job that paid enough money so they would only have one job, or it was someone who was in a situation where they had no health benefits and they were trying to get a job with health benefits.

Ninety percent of the people that I interviewed said something to the effect that they got laid off from a job that they never, ever expected to be laid off from. They went on to say that they anticipated that they would be out of work for a few weeks, and many of them had been out of work for 5, 6, 7 months.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that this scene that I witnessed and this testimony that I heard last week at my job fair is not unique. I would not be surprised if other job fairs had record attendance, as mine did, and that people were saying the same kinds of things.

My point, Mr. Speaker, is that when presented with opportunities, Americans want to work. When presented with the opportunity, they want to work. But until the economy turns around and people can find work, Mr. Speaker, unemployment benefits are all these Americans have to make ends meet.

So I ask Members to join us in calling upon every Member of this Congress to demand that they join us in passing H.R. 1652, the Unemployment Benefits Extension Act, that I have joined my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), in co-sponsoring.

This bill, H.R. 1652, would extend the Temporary Federal Unemployment Insurance Program by 6 months and

would extend the number of additional weeks of Federal unemployment benefits from 13 weeks to 26 weeks.

This Congress must take action as soon as possible. The American people have a right to ask whether President Bush and our Republican colleagues in Congress will help the millions of Americans whose benefits will expire on May 31.

I might add a footnote, Mr. Speaker, that the new numbers will come out on June 6. At that time, we anticipate that the numbers will be even higher, somewhere in the area of 3 million jobs having been lost since President Bush became President.

The fact is that the Republican majority refused to include any extension of benefits in the tax bill that passed the House, and the majority has shown no signs that they will extend unemployment insurance before it expires. I should add, Mr. Speaker, that we are proposing to help American workers who are out of jobs through no fault of their own. They want to work. Extending unemployment benefits is a proven strategy for stimulating our economy.

The Republicans seem, Mr. Speaker, to have decided that, instead of helping unemployed workers, they should give the average millionaire nearly \$100,000 in tax breaks. Something is simply wrong with that picture. I hope that we who are privileged to serve the people of America in this Congress of the United States of America will change that harsh and unproductive picture by passing H.R. 1652.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. Ending unemployment compensation does not provide incentive for Americans to find invisible jobs. Instead, extending unemployment compensation increases demand for goods and services and serves to create real jobs for those Americans who are able and willing to work.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am troubled when some people begin to compare unemployment compensation to an entitlement. Is it not the government's responsibility to provide these benefits when the economy is weak? Was the unemployment trust fund not established to accomplish this very purpose, to cushion the financial blow to average Americans during times of recession and joblessness? Mr. Speaker, the answer to both questions is a resounding yes.

It gives me great honor and great privilege, Mr. Speaker, to recognize my colleague, the gentlewoman from the great State of California (Ms. LEE), who has consistently synchronized her conscience with her conduct. She has consistently made it clear that she stands up for the people who cannot stand up for themselves, stands up for those who may be down and out, and stands up for those who think that they are not being heard. But tonight she stands up for so many people who are unemployed, who simply want to work.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first let me thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) and our Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus for his kind and humbling remarks, and for his leadership on each and every issue that we are faced with here in our great country. I just want to thank him again for his consistent leadership and also for ensuring that we have an opportunity to talk to America every now and then on the issues that are burning, and actually what the realities are of what we are doing here and what we are not doing. I thank the gentleman for allowing our caucus and other Members of Congress to really speak truth to power.

Mr. Speaker, first, let me just say how grave my concerns are about this Bush administration's economic policy and how it will truly devastate American families. We see a strategy at work in the Bush budget and in the tax cuts for the wealthy that are really at its center. And, yes, to me it looks like class warfare. That is what it looks like.

At the end of this month, we are going to see the devastating effects of the Bush economic strategy with the expiration of the unemployment insurance program. On the last day of this month, the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation Program will expire. It is going to expire, even though we Democrats have pushed for an extension of this program, and for an additional 13 weeks of benefits, for a total of 26 weeks of Federal extended unemployment benefits both to workers who have already exhausted their benefits and to workers who will be laid off in the coming months.

Without this extension, an estimated 80,000 unemployed workers nationwide each week, that is 80,000 each week, will lose their benefits. That is hard to imagine. The number is so high because we are at a record level of unemployment; and we are, to be quite frank, in a jobs depression. In the last 3 months, the economy has lost 500,000 jobs. Since the beginning of President Bush's Presidency, the economy has lost 2.5 million private sector jobs. That is quite an accomplishment.

In fact, unless President Bush somehow adds 2.5 million jobs in the next few months, he will be, I believe, the first President since they started actually keeping labor records who has failed to net a single job. In an economy that has historically been the strongest in the world, the President has not been able to net one job. That is pretty pitiful.

In my congressional district, we have over 75,000 unemployed workers. Beginning June 1, an estimated 1,400 workers will lose unemployment benefits each week. That is just in my congressional district, the 9th Congressional District of California. That number will be on top of the 10,000 workers in the region

who have already lost their benefits. These are horrible numbers. Yet in spite of the fact that families are struggling to pay rent and buy food, the President and the Republicans have done nothing, and I mean nothing, to help these workers.

They claim to have an economic stimulus package, but for them, economic stimulus means tax cuts. If you have lots of capital gains, then of course you will like the Bush tax cuts. If you are one of the wealthiest Americans, then of course, yes, you, too, will like the Bush tax cuts.

Members cannot tell me that in a tax package of almost \$550 billion there is not enough money to extend unemployment benefits to people who do not have dividends or capital gains, but are just trying to basically pay their rents, buy groceries, and take care of their families.

For the life of me, I am trying to figure out how does a tax cut benefit someone who is not working. Democrats tried to extend unemployment benefits to help American workers, but the Republican leadership explicitly rejected it. They needed to save money for their wealthy friends. They needed to save money for their friends who run corporations.

In a pool of \$550 billion, they did not have the money for the people who are looking for work each and every day in a job market where three people on the average are applying for one single job vacancy, three people.

□ 2045

They did not have money for the real people of America. That is going to mean tens of thousands of workers across America are going to find it even more difficult just to survive. Do we not care about the economic security of those who are not rich?

In my district, 27,000 workers will lose unemployment benefits in the coming months. The Republicans do not even realize that unemployment insurance may actually be an economic stimulus. One study estimate that 13 additional weeks of benefits would provide an estimated \$150 million of stimulus to the regional economy.

Stimulating the economy really, though, has not been a hallmark for Republicans except when it comes to adding to the wealth of those Americans who are already wealthy. The wealthy people of America do not need dividend cuts. But the unemployed of America desperately need some help, just a little help to ensure that they and their families can survive an economy that they really, quite frankly, are not responsible for.

Now what happens when people are desperate because they do not have a job, nor unemployment benefits? Children go hungry, foreclosures increase, more people become homeless, emergency rooms in our already stressed public hospitals systems become more taxed, domestic violence increases and, of course, as we are witnessing in Cali-

fornia, there is an increase in the crime rate.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me call your attention to the unemployment rates as of this last April. The white population had an unemployment rate of about 6 percent. The Latino unemployment rate was about 7.5 percent. And the African-American unemployment rate is about 10.9, close to 11 percent. Now when you look at the massive budget cuts coupled with these high rates of unemployment and no job creation efforts on the horizon and no extension of unemployment benefits, what is the message, quite frankly, what is the message that you are sending to people of color? Do they matter? Or is it only the wealthy who are the ones that this administration is looking out for?

The facts speak for themselves, Mr. Speaker. So let us extend unemployment benefits for American workers and let us do it now. We must pass H.R. 1652, and I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) for yielding and for allowing us this opportunity to wake up, America.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for her statement. One of the things that you said that I found so very interesting when you were talking about all of these people losing their jobs, 2.7 million since President Bush has come in to office, but one of the things that is so interesting, too, is we are very concerned about health care. A lot of these jobs that folks are losing had health insurance benefits that accompanied them, and so then we got a lot of people who have no insurance.

Ms. LEE. I thank the gentleman for raising that. Because here in our country we have approximately 44 million uninsured, and that number is rising as a result of the 2.5, 2.7 million unemployed. Universal health care has got to be our goal in terms of any health care reform. But, in the meantime, what do we do to help those who are just struggling from day to day, who have no jobs, who have no unemployment insurance?

Once again, we go back to our public hospital system and see individuals, families sitting in waiting rooms for health care when, in fact, they have no place to go; and this is unconscionable in the wealthiest and most powerful country in the world.

Let me just finally say our country, rightfully so, is helping to develop a universal health care system for Iraq. What about a universal health care system for the people of America, Mr. Speaker?

I think that perhaps again during this crisis maybe those who have not supported universal health care will now understand that working men and women, middle-class individuals need universal health care as a result of this unfortunate situation which our government and this administration has placed them in.

Mr. CUMMINGS. One of the things that I notice in talking to our mayor

and talking to city officials, we have discovered that crime seems to go up when unemployment is high; and I guess it is kind of a logical correlation. You would hope it would not be, but it is. People when they are pushed against the wall, I think, are sometimes forced to do things they might not normally do because the basic instinct of people is to survive. Sadly, we have seen that in our city where people lose their jobs.

I guess this is another factor that comes to play there, a lot of people do not realize how significant a job is. A job helps you to do for your family. If someone has got a child or got a family, they want to be able to take care of their family when the little girl comes home and says, Mommy, we are going on a class trip, something as simple as that, and mommy has to say I cannot afford that \$5 or that \$7 for that class trip. All of that kind of stuff is painful.

I have not even gotten into things like food and shelter, things that are basic needs. But that has to wear on folks. And that is the toll that we, I guess, a lot of people do not think about it. We think about the economic side, but we do not think about the wear and tear on people.

Again, one of the things about having a job is that it gives people a sense of worth because they feel as if they are contributing. So we do not know how all of those factors come together to really be quite harmful not only to the individuals, but certainly if you got mommy and daddy in a bad mood trying to figure out how they will make ends meet, I am sure that does not make for a happy and consistently healthy household.

Ms. LEE. The gentleman raised a very good point. I think if you look around your country now and you look at the crime rates, and I, unfortunately, have to site California. The increase has been 28 percent, I think. There is a direct correlation between the unemployment rate and the escalation in the crime rate. Desperate people do desperate things.

As a professional psychiatric social worker, I have seen what depression and what the lack of self-worth and the lack of self-esteem prompt people to do, oftentimes unconsciously. Again, desperate people do desperate things.

Look at our young people. You just look at, first of all, low-income individuals who now as a result of not having any unemployment insurance, coupled with the cuts that are taking place in the school districts with afterschool programs, what is going to happen to these young kids who need afterschool programs as a result of having nowhere to go after school because their parents are out trying to find a job, trying to survive?

You layer all of these cuts on top of no money and on top of not having a job and little hope because there are very few job opportunities because we have not created the investment in our

infrastructure and we have not created an investment in housing construction. We have not created an investment to increase job opportunities. So, once again, on top of all of these very dismal circumstances and reactions, then you have no hope. And what happens when people have no hope?

It is very hard for me and for many of us here. I know for those of us who are Democrats and those of us on the Congressional Black Caucus, it pushes us against the wall in terms of what do we do next.

How do we be a real advocate to create these jobs that people need because their life, their world is based around their self-esteem and their sense of dignity which involves a job, a good-paying job with benefits as central to their existence?

Mr. CUMMINGS. One of the recent reports that came out showed that when you increase those unemployment benefits, for every dollar you are bringing in \$1.73 to stimulate the economy because that money is circulating. I found that very interesting, because I was just talking to people in my neighborhood.

When I visit the barber or visit the local grocery stores or small grocery stores in my neighborhood and talk to the shoe repair people, I kind of try to get a feel for how business is. And you would think that a lot of times people do not realize how when people are not working it effects almost everybody. There is such a chain. It is like a chain with a lot of links. If a person is not working, that means he may not be getting a haircut. That means the barber will not go and do certain things.

One of the things that was interesting, most of the people I have talked to over the last 3 or 4 months told me business was down. One of the things they say is that they can almost predict how much business they will have based upon the season of the year. It may be small restaurants or whatever, but they said that they have been seeing their charts are going down, down, down with regards to income, which means that they are having to lay off a lot of people.

Ms. LEE. For the life of me, I do not quite understand why the Republicans do not see the connection between having money in one's pocket, whether it is through a job or the unemployment insurance, how that does not effect an economic stimulus thrust. When you spend money, you stimulate the economy. Some of us may not believe in consumerism, but this is America and people buy stuff. I mean, they buy stuff all the time. If you do not have any money, you cannot buy anything; and buying stuff, whatever it is, leads to economic recovery.

So extending unemployment benefits allows people to have money in their pockets to not only buy food and take care of their families but also buy what they need to survive which, of course, in the private sector helps increase, well, it may not be a profit margin

right now but just may keep businesses from going out of business, especially in our neighborhoods which really are dependent on that type of commerce.

Mr. CUMMINGS. One of the things that I always admired about the United States is how whenever there was tragedy in any part of the country, be it a tornado or be it problems, big fires or whatever, Americans have a sense that we want to rally to that part of our country that has a problem.

FEMA is out there whenever we have a disaster, and we want that to happen because we want all Americans to be strong. And here we have a situation where we have many Americans who are suffering.

It is one thing to have an idea of how you are going to make ends meet, but when you are sitting there and you are trying to figure out how are you going to pay these bills, I mean, to me that is a situation that is a state of emergency, too, because people still have to feed their children. They still have to buy tennis shoes. They still have to do the things that they do from day to day. So you would think that when this whole unemployment insurance law came into effect, it came into effect basically to try to deal with situations where people were out of work through no fault of their own.

As a matter of fact, if you look at the entire structure and the regulations that go with unemployment insurance, that is basically what it goes to, people who are out of work because of no fault of their own. So here we have this emergency situation, people who fit the category, it just so happens that we have an economy that is on the downstroke and not doing very well, and so with that same sense of rescue that FEMA does, I would hope that we would do the same thing.

But the fact is that time is running out. That is why we are here tonight, trying to say to this Congress that there are people who are suffering and who are in a state of emergency.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, we all recognize our national security needs in our country and rise to the occasion and appropriate money for all kinds of efforts to ensure national security. Well, I believe that the economic security of every man, woman and child is very critical to our overall national security. We must have a stable, healthy population in our country. Otherwise, our country becomes vulnerable from within. People become restless, people have no hope, as I said earlier, and it is very important that we provide just this minimal extension of unemployment insurance benefits just to let them know we care during these very volatile times.

Here we passed, well, not with my vote, but passed an \$80 billion supplemental. Again, \$80 billion is a lot of money. I think we should find \$80 billion to help those who are unemployed. We found it a couple of months ago. I think we can find it now. I think it is very important to show the American

people that we care about their security here.

We must also remember these young women who, because of the Welfare to Work initiative and welfare reform which some of us agree with, some of us do not agree with, bottom line is time limits are running out. They are hopefully still working, but many are not because of the economy. Many were working two jobs and three jobs with no benefits.

□ 2100

Now their unemployment compensation is running out. Well, under the very awful welfare reform law, they run up against 5 years and they cannot even go back and apply for public assistance. So what do they do? What does a young woman do with two or three kids? They cannot even go back to try to get a safety net provided for a couple of months.

So this lack of attention to the American people, to our people, to women, to children, to average everyday working men and women, this lack of attention, I think, is very wrong and it is immoral. I believe that our country is beginning to see the real hypocrisy in many of our policies and how the Republicans can continue to look out for those who are privileged, yet for those who are struggling, cannot seem to really figure out what to do or will not do the right thing, when in fact Democrats consistently have put forward proposals to help lift everyone up.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for joining me and joining our caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus, in addressing these issues.

So often I think people would ask the question: Why is it that members of the Congressional Black Caucus and other members of our party would take the time to speak up on these issues? I guess they would wonder, is there any hope? I believe that we have no choice.

When we see people who are down and out and going through problems, we have no choice but to speak up for them. The fact is that their tax dollars, the \$80 billion that the gentlewoman talked about a few moments ago, the downpayment on the Iraq war, the same people that are unemployed today, those were their tax dollars that were used for the Iraq war. Their tax dollars are the same ones that our President says that he is going to rebuild all of the schools and educational facilities over there in Iraq. They are the same tax dollars. Their same tax dollars are providing universal health care in Iraq. Their same tax dollars that they paid are going to create an election system that will, I am sure, rival the one that we might have in this country.

They are merely saying, okay, if we can do all of that with our tax dollars, then why can I not be rescued when I am drowning because I do not have a job, through no fault of my own; and if

I could work, I would work, and I would continuously and happily contribute to our economy and pay my taxes?

It is very painful when we think about it. So that is why we stand here and stand up for folks, because we know that there are many Americans who are saying, well, that makes sense, and they need a voice. So that is why we are here.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his very eloquent and very passionate statement, because I believe that Americans are beginning to see the hypocrisy and the discrepancy and the disparities in all of the Republican policies, and especially as it relates to tax policy.

The gentleman raised the fact that working people should have a right to some of the benefits in our country because they contribute immensely to the workings of government and to the society; yet they are the ones who never see those benefits. And if we are true to our country, true to our flag, true to our Constitution, then we need to work each and every day to ensure that liberty and justice for all prevails, because certainly, right now, there are millions of Americans out there who are wondering why they have been left out of this great American Dream.

Mr. CUMMINGS. The gentlewoman and I have been here so often when our colleagues cite all kinds of passages from the Bible and talk about how we are supposed to do for our brothers and sisters. It makes me wonder sometimes whether we are reading the same document when it comes to folks that are having the problems that they are having. This whole idea of unemployment benefits, even if we did not see it as a moral issue, if we put that aside and say I just want to deal with the economics, the economics would tell us that this is good for America.

So I thank the gentlewoman, and I thank other members of the Congressional Black Caucus who have submitted statements. We know that there are many Americans who are depending on us to continue to stand, and we will stand.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman; and once again I urge my colleagues tonight, if they happened to have seen this discussion, to support H.R. 1652. And if no one from the House is listening, let us hope that America is listening; and I am urging our country to wake up, get in touch with the United States Congress and say, let us pass H.R. 1652 on behalf of those very noble working men and women who deserve an extension of their unemployment insurance benefits.

Mr. CUMMINGS. As I close, Mr. Speaker, I would just say that I visited a school the other day, and I was thinking about the little children who were standing up and putting their little hands to their hearts. I would say probably a third of these children had parents who were unemployed. As I watched them put their little hands up

to their little hearts, these little first graders, and say, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America," and go on and say, "one Nation under God, indivisible," that every time we get to the "one Nation" piece, it makes me on the one hand feel very proud that this is one Nation, but on the other hand I feel sad that one Nation applies in certain instances; but when it comes to the weak in that Nation, suddenly we go our separate ways.

So we have a lot of people hurting, and the question is: What will we do to help them?

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the real "shock and awe" is what's happening to American workers.

The House of Representatives passed an extension of unemployment insurance benefits on January 27th for almost 3 million unemployed American workers. At that time I stated that the legislation is, albeit a small one, step in the right direction. However, I was supportive of a much stronger unemployment compensation extension, one that would have provided benefits to an additional 1 million American workers whose benefits have expired.

Specifically, on December 28th, 800,000 Americans lost their extended unemployment benefits. The Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation (TEUC) program ended on December 28th because the President and House Republicans rejected Democratic pleas to extend the TEUC program with a compromise bill that the Senate had passed unanimously.

I was in full support of the House Democrats' comprehensive unemployment benefits bill introduced by Representative RANGEL. This bill would have reestablished and expanded the Federal extended unemployment benefits program. Most importantly, it would have guaranteed all jobless workers at least 26 weeks of extended benefits.

Unfortunately, the House GOP leadership refused to allow a vote on this Democratic bill. Instead, they only allowed members to vote on their bill, which provides an extension of only 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits, with no extension to workers whose benefits have already expired.

Mr. Speaker, the Dallas-Fort Worth's 100 biggest employers have eliminated about 41,000 jobs in the last two years, according to the Dallas Morning News' Annual Top 100 Employers ranking. The big employers have been hit especially hard because they include a high proportion of technology and telecom companies. More than a third of the region's total job losses at employers of all sizes were in technology, according to one estimate. And the long-suffering industry has shown no signs of rebounding.

To make matters worse, my District's biggest local employer, AMR Corp., parent company of American Airlines Inc., expects to shed thousands more jobs in coming months in an effort to keep the company solvent. The airline cut 3,000 jobs in the last year and this month began notifying 7,100 unionized workers that their jobs would be cut under the new concessionary contracts approved by the unions. Dallas-based Greyhound Lines Inc., the nation's largest operator of passenger buses and number 78 on this year's list, lost

about 200 employees. And the cuts may not be over.

In the last three years alone, of the 105,000 jobs lost in the Dallas area, 30,000 to 40,000 were probably in information technology. And it's taking longer than ever for those unemployed workers to find new jobs.

Such figures stand in sharp contrast to February 2001, when unemployment in Dallas was 4.2 percent. In unemployment figures released recently, the nation's jobless rate had reached 6 percent, matching December's eight-year high. More than 500,000 Americans have lost their jobs in the last three months alone.

Mr. Speaker, we will need to provide meaningful assistance to workers by passing health care relief for those who have lost their coverage along with their jobs. This Congress should stay here, extend unemployment benefits for at least an additional 13 weeks, and tackle the serious problem of how we are going to put America back to work. These are the kinds of real benefits that we owe American families.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, we have only three more days to provide an extension of unemployment benefits before millions of hard working men and women lose their only remaining way to put food on the table.

Congress created the temporary extension of unemployment benefits last year in response to continuing poor economic performance. The need has only increased since then!

The total job loss in the Bush economy has risen to a staggering 2.5 million private jobs since the President took office.

Instead of doling tax cuts to the wealthy and allowing corporations to steal their employee's pensions, our government should be granting another extension of unemployment benefits.

These are benefits that millions of Americans are depending on to pay for groceries, utilities, and rent.

The unemployment rate is now at 6 percent, and still climbing. In many states, like California, the rate is even higher. Yet, many of these hard working Americans have already exhausted their unemployment insurance (UI) benefits.

Americans are finding themselves without jobs!

Without health insurance!!

The only thing they are finding is a growing sense of frustration, despair, and fear of their government.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my disappointment at the administration's and the Republican Congress' economic policy, a policy that leaves the working class and our nation's minorities behind.

We need an extension of unemployment benefits now!

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, during the Republican Presidential Primaries of 1980, George Bush, Sr. referred to Ronald Reagan's proposed economic policy as "voodoo economics." At the time, the economy was in the throes of a recession with a stubborn 5 to 6 percent unemployment rate; and millions of Americans were out of work. Predicated on the ludicrous dogma of "supply side economics"—which has since been thoroughly discredited—President Reagan's job-creation policy entailed a massive tax cut overwhelmingly benefitting the wealthy; and the effect were to purportedly "trickle down" to the unemployed.

During those 1980 primary debates, Mr. Bush, Sr. was correct in referring to President Reagan's policies as "voodoo economics." His tax-cut was not successful in creating new jobs, but in creating massive budget deficits and an appalling gap between the rich and the poor.

Fast forward 23 years, and it seems that our current President should heed the advice of his father. For once again the Republicans have responded to our recession and high unemployment rate with voodoo economics. Once again, their magic elixir is an indefensible, obscene tax cut for millionaires that will provide negligible relief for the working class and will have minimal impact on job creation. Yet once again they strenuously assert that their plan will create jobs and bring relief to millions of working class Americans. If only this Congress would listen to the elder Mr. Bush.

The American economy has lost 2.7 million jobs since President Bush came to office. The current national unemployment rate is 6 percent. 8.8 million Americans are unemployed, 2 million of which have been unemployed for over 6 months. In just the last three months, 500,000 more Americans have lost their jobs. In my home state of Illinois, the unemployment rate is 6.6 percent and rising. We have lost at least 108,700 jobs since 2001, and over 422,000 Illinois citizens are out of work. My home city of Chicago has been hit particularly hard, and my congressional district on the south side of Chicago has been hit even harder.

These are not abstract numbers. While the country club millionaires who will benefit from the GOP tax cuts probably do not walk the streets of Chicago and witness the extreme poverty and hardship that come with high unemployment, I stand here on the floor of the House of Representatives, with my colleagues from the Congressional Black Caucus, to tell this Congress that the pain from unemployment is acute, and it is real.

The President and the Republican Congress seem to callously treat joblessness and economic hardship as some sort of unavoidable condition that can be exploited to justify their policies that blatantly benefit the wealthy. While this is a harsh indictment, what other conclusion can one come to? After all, the facts are quite clear: in the face of widespread financial misery whereby millions of Americans are out of work and millions more are teetering the brink of unemployment, the President and Congress do not choose to extend unemployment benefits to those Americans who actually feel the pain of unemployment; they do not choose to adequately equip states with the financial resources necessary to relieve the ancillary hardships that stem from unemployment (such a crime as lack of health insurance); they do not even choose to offer significant tax-relief to working-class and middle-income Americans who are the actual taxpayers losing their jobs.

No: President Bush and this Congress choose to address this issue by passing a \$550 billion tax cut that overwhelmingly benefits the wealthy and the very people who are in the least need of help; and then try to call it a "job creation bill." The sheer absurdity of this tax-cutting policy, on its face, suggests that the Republican-controlled Congress is disingenuous and is not truly serious about addressing the despair of joblessness. Instead,

the President and this Congress have chosen to simply make the rich even richer; and simply cloak their policies under the guise of "job creation" (which is the latest marketing spin to come from the White House justifying its elitist tax cut.)

For how could one possibly believe and defend the assertion that the President's tax-cut package will actually create jobs? All of the evidence overwhelmingly points to the contrary. According to Congress's very own analysis the Republican tax-cut proposal—notwithstanding their vehement assertions otherwise—will not substantially kick-start the economy and create jobs. Both the Congressional budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation has proffered detailed studies that show this tax-cut package will have virtually no sustainable effect on unemployment. If they choose not to believe their own analyses, Congress should listen to other credible sources: Federal Reserve Chairman, Alan Greenspan, Nobel Prize economists and financial titans such as Warren Buffet have said that the Republican tax-cut plan will do nothing to create new jobs. Thus, if one takes the Republicans at their word and believes that they are sincerely trying to help working class Americans with this tax cut package, then one must inevitably come to the conclusion that their choice of policy is borne from sheer myopia or even stupidity.

In reality, however, it's easy to see what's really going on: the Republican tax-cut plan is geared towards granting tax relief to wealthy Americans and has little if anything to do with job creation. As ten Noble Prize winning economists put it: "Regardless of how one views the specifics of the Bush plan, there is wide agreement that its purpose is a permanent change in the tax structure and not the creation of jobs and growth in the near term."

Thus, we here in Congress still have a lot of work to do. Along with the President, we have to enact real and sincere policies to create jobs and bring economic relief to millions of Americans. The citizens of Illinois—the citizens in my district on the south side of Chicago—deserve a responsive President and Congress that are serious about addressing the hardships of unemployment. The legislative solutions are not elusive. This is not rocket science. Congress should extend benefits to millions of unemployed Americans who will soon see their benefits expire and be left with no income. We should authorize and appropriate substantial funds to the states who are financially strapped and can no longer deliver some basic services to their citizens.

We must enact targeted and responsible fiscal stimulus that will kick start sustainable economic growth unencumbered by future budget deficits. Not only are these policy prescriptions the compassionate thing to do, they are the smart, economically-sound thing to do.

I urge this Congress to act now. Working class men and women are depending on us.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, this evening I implore my fellow colleagues to invest in our American families. The issue of this country's economic growth and stability is before us yet again, and it appears as if we are about to worsen the situation.

We first failed our American families by approving a budget that neglects the economic and social needs of this country's citizens. This Congress also ensured that future generations will be burdened with debt as well.

We must not fail our American families again. The Members of Congress have the opportunity to extend unemployment benefits as such benefits expire on May 31, 2003. We must do so.

Our African American families have fared the worst during this economic crisis. The unemployment rate for African Americans is almost 11 percent at 10.9 percent. This rate is twice that of whites. In February, the number of unemployed African Americans totaled 1.7 million.

Every Member of Congress is witnessing firsthand the toll that this economy is taking on our constituents. Not one state is unaffected by this issue. The unemployment rate in Michigan is 6.7 percent. The unemployment rate in Detroit is 7.2 percent. This particular statistic has more than doubled since the last Administration. In November of 2000, the unemployment rate in Detroit was at 3.0 percent.

The budget resolution approved last month guarantees that this country has not yet seen the worst of these unemployment statistics for my District, our community, and the entire country as well.

The Administration claims that the approved budget will create 190,000 jobs. Is the Administration to be commended for creating 190,000 jobs? This number equates to less than the number of jobs that were lost during February and March of this year. During those months, 477,000 jobs were lost.

How are we to alleviate this economic downturn when we fail to provide employment opportunities for this country's citizens? How can we then fail to give those hard-working Americans, who have been laid off with no job prospects in sight, sustenance during these hard times.

While I have highlighted the unemployment statistics within the African American community and Michigan, let me make it clear—this is not a Black issue or a Michigan issue. This is an issue that affects all Americans and as such, we must extend the Temporary Emergency Unemployment Compensation Program (TEUC).

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to address the rising unemployment in our country. Since President Bush took office, 2.7 million people—538,000 in the past three months—have lost their jobs. The unemployment rate now stands at 8.8 million people, 6 percent, the highest level in more than 10 years. California, which has borne the brunt of the economic downturn has nearly 1.2 million people out of work. In my home city of Los Angeles, our unemployment rate is almost 6.5 percent.

The President and his party will say that it isn't their fault. They will say that this recession started well before the President was sworn into office. That clearly is not true, even if it were, the President's policies have only made the problem worse. By advocating tax cuts to solve every problem, President Bush has avoided taking any type of leadership role in solving this problem. The President, so far, has prescribed tax cuts as his sole cure for budget surpluses, budget deficits, the energy crisis, the war on terrorism and heaven knows what else. It is clear that this is part of a calculated strategy on the part of this Administration to starve domestic health and social programs to meet our peoples' needs: Programs like S-Chip, Head Start, public housing. Unfortunately, this list goes on and on.

Meanwhile, our nation's workers are out of work, out of options and out of benefits. Nationwide, an estimated 2.1 million workers—80,000 a week—will exhaust their regular unemployment benefits over the next five months. In California, 150,400 workers will exhaust their unemployment benefits by the end of May. But, while Congress can find the time to pass two multi-trillion tax cuts to benefit the wealthy, those who need it least, it can not find the time to extend unemployment benefits for workers whose benefits have been exhausted, those who need it most.

Extending unemployment benefits is the simplest and most effective way we can improve this economy. A recent study by Economy.com found that each dollar dedicated to extending unemployment benefits would boost the economy by \$1.73. However, the same study found that the centerpiece of the GOP package, the dividend tax cut, would be the least efficient in stimulating the economy. Each dollar dedicated to reducing the taxation of dividends would boost the economy by only 9 cents.

But the President continues to advocate tax cuts. As if this failed policy will now miraculously work. It did not work in 2001 and it will not work in 2003. After passage of the largest tax cut in US history—\$1.3 trillion—the economy lost 1.7 million jobs. The Republicans call their plan a "jobs and economic growth" bill. Yet, study after study—from the Congressional Budget Office to Economy.com to the editorial pages of the country's leading papers—show that it is anything but a job and growth plan. The bill the Republicans have drafted will have no stimulus effect on the economy, nor will it create jobs.

The Democrats, on the other hand, have developed a strong and balanced policy that will create over a million jobs this year alone. Importantly, the Democrats put money in the hands of the unemployed through the extension of unemployment benefits and tax breaks that help the middle class. It also provides desperately needed help to the States who are struggling under the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. Under the Republicans' plan, mind you, economists expect the states' financial crisis to worsen.

About the only thing that this bill does is explode the deficit. Less than two years after President Clinton left office, we find ourselves in record deficits and an exploding national debt. President Bush promised when he came into office that he would pay off the debt, not too quickly though. He was concerned about the repercussions of paying off the debt too quickly.

So what did this president do? Well, he certainly didn't pay off the debt. Instead, he increased the national debt by \$1.5 trillion over the next ten years. As if this was not bad enough, the debt subject to statutory limit, which at the beginning of this Administration was \$5.7 trillion, is now projected to reach more than \$12 trillion by the end of 2013, all thanks to Republican policies.

I close, Mr. Speaker, wondering when we will throw away these policies of yesteryear and start doing something of substance? People are hurting. They don't need cheerleading or Horatio Algers stories about how, if they work hard, they, too, can become millionaires. They need our help. When are we going to stop pretending that tax cuts are the cure all for the nation's problems and begin doing

meaningful work that will put our constituents to work and not burden our children with trillions in debt. When will we return to funding health, education and social service programs to meet the needs of our people. I hope soon, Mr. Speaker.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLE). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 2345

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DREIER) at 11 o'clock and 45 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1588, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-122) on the resolution (H. Res. 247) providing for further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1588) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2004 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2004, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2185, UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION AMENDMENTS OF 2003

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-123) on the resolution (H. Res. 248) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2185) to extend the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2002, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(a) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-124) on the resolution (H. Res. 249) waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, which